

Policy Lead report for Planning, Protective Services and Licensing Committee

This report covers the period from 16th April 2014 to 16th April 2015

Planning

Local Development Plan

Further to the decision of the Full Council in January to progress the Proposed Local Development Plan through the adoption process, and after submission to The Scottish Government, notification was received advising that the Council could proceed to adopt the plan in accordance with the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (Scotland) Act 1997. In view of this positive response the Argyll and Bute Local Development was formally adopted by the Council on the 26th March 2015. A statutory requirement of the Local Development Plan is that it is accompanied by an Action Programme which has to be adopted and published within 3 months of the adoption of the LDP and a report regarding this will appear later on this Council Agenda.

Planning Performance Framework 2013/14

Our Planning Performance Framework (PPF) for 2013/14, which is the principal performance measure for Development Management and Development Policy within Planning and Regulatory Services, was submitted to the Scottish Government in September 2014 for independent review by a Scottish Government appointed consultant. This was the 3rd Annual PPF which our Planning Service has had to submit and it differed from the previous 2 by virtue of a mechanism enacted by the Regulatory Reform Act 2014 whereby a new 'penalty clause' has been introduced which can financially penalise poor performing Planning Authorities who do not demonstrate positive outcomes and continuous improvement in their PPF.

After the review was carried out by the independent consultant on behalf of the Scottish Government it was then considered by the Planning Minister, Alex Neil MSP, and I am pleased to be able to report that the PPF was very well received and it was noted that the PPF clearly demonstrated an open for business approach committed to working closely with others and commending the Council's link between the LDP, action plans and the single outcome agreement.

Training Development

The PPSL committee have an ongoing training development programme in place which covers a wide range of topics related to the planning system, the

'bite sized' sessions are well attended by PPSL members and generally take place before the monthly meeting of the PPSL committee. Over the last year the training sessions have covered the Local Development Plan, Competent Motions, Placemaking, Agricultural and Forestry Permitted Development Rights - Hill Tracks as well as sessions presented by Argyll and Bute Council Roads Department and Historic Scotland regarding their role in the planning system as statutory consultees. Members also had the opportunity to visit a Fish Farm on Loch Fyne to gain an understanding of the issues that can be raised with this type of application and the committee have a regular training programme agreed till December 2015.

Customer Service Excellence Award

In my last report I advised that after a long and intense process our Building Standard's Service having met the necessary requirements had been awarded Customer Service Excellence accreditation by the UK Government, an accreditation which is reviewed annually. Well a year passes quickly and in December I am delighted to report that the service retained and was re-awarded the Customer Service Excellence Award having met every requirement in full in a recent audit. Congratulations to our Building Standards Manager, Martin Matheson and his team for retaining this prestigious award for their service.

Regulatory Services

Regulatory Services Staff Day

On 12th November 2014, along with my Depute Cllr Alex McNaughton, I had the pleasure of attending the afternoon session of the Regulatory Services Annual Staff training day. This proved to be a most informative afternoon for us both and we heard presentations from various members of the Regulatory Services team covering topics such as Shellfish Fraud, Vulnerable Consumers, Licensing Standards, Public Health Monitoring of the Beaver Trials, New Psychoactive Substances (Legal Highs) and the Illegal Import of Dogs. Each presentation highlighting to us the importance of the work carried out by the Regulatory Services staff which makes Argyll and Bute a safer place to live, eat and visit.

Council Excellence Awards

Towards the end of 2014 Regulatory Services had 2 applications shortlisted for the Council Excellence Awards which eventually received Gold awards in the categories of Efficient and Effective Service Delivery, for their novel market

strategy for animal health and welfare, and Listening and Responding to Our Customers, for their Business Compliance Toolkit for Licensing Standards. Congratulations to all the staff involved in gaining these awards which raises the profile of the excellent work undertaken by staff within Regulatory Services giving recognition to their commitment and hard work.

New Food Body for Scotland

The new Food Standards Scotland (FSS) agency came into effect on the 1st April 2015, the new agency will bring about a number of changes and will consolidate a range of food related issues, including diet and obesity, which were previously with the Scottish Government.

Although there will be changes affecting the food enforcement role of local authorities the FSS design is founded upon this work still being done by local authorities and a report providing further information will be presented to the PPSL in due course after staff have attended stakeholder events.

Protecting Consumers Action Plan

Work is progressing to deliver the plan and most of the outstanding issues relate to national arrangements. SCOTSS (Society of Chief Officers of Trading Standards in Scotland) have agreed to set up a Project Team to develop performance measures and benchmarks for Trading Standards and Argyll and Bute Council are members of the Project Team, a TS Service Plan for 2015/16 is being prepared and an awareness raising campaign for the Councils 'Buy with Confidence Scheme' which will initially be targeted at the Building Industry, and was officially launched in November 2014 is due to be started imminently after a delay in securing leaflets and other materials.

Community Managed Facilities Event

A Community Managed Facilities Event was held on Saturday 7th March 2015 in Garelochhead and was attended by Mary Watt (EHO), and Eric Dearie (Licensing Standards Officer) who gave presentations on food safety and health and safety relating to community halls and events as well as licensing issues including occasional licences. The event was very successful with a wide range of questions being answered for those in attendance.

Operational Issues

Although Regulatory Services are very busy working to deliver their planned and programmed work, the service can be affected by reactive service requests and incidents. They were recently involved in considering the

environmental issues affecting the tanker, Lysblink Seaways, which ran aground on the Ardnamurchan peninsula. A multi-agency response ensured that pollution was minimised, that oil and fuel was transferred from the vessel, and that it was recovered and taken to its final repair facility.

Age related sales

Recent trends have identified improving awareness by retailers on restricting the sale of cigarettes to those under 18 years of age, and this has been reported to Committee previously. However, recent work, by Trading Standards of 19 businesses in Mid Argyll and Dunoon found 5 premises (26%) sold to our underage volunteer. Three of the premises are to receive a final warning as it was the first occasion that they had sold to underage customers. The other two premises, however, had sold to underage customers on at least one previous occasion, and were served with fixed penalty notices (FPN's). One of these premises had also had a previous FPN, so was subject to an increased penalty. This is disappointing and Trading Standards will continue to target underage sales during 2015-16

Operation Monarda

Operation Monarda is an annual police led campaign which focusses on the prevention and detection of doorstep crime via a week of action. This year Operation Monarda ran from Monday 23rd March until Sunday 29th March 2015 and Argyll and Bute's Trading Standards Officers participated in this operation as part of their work to deliver the Councils Protecting Consumers Action Plan.

This concludes my Policy Lead report for Planning & Regulatory Services and I would finish by thanking all officers within the service for their continued support in my role as Policy Lead.

Councillor David Kinniburgh

Policy Lead Planning & Regulatory Services